**Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks**

1. On the page after the title page, the author has a quote from Elie Wiesel, taken from a book he wrote. Why do you think Skloot chose this? How is she preparing you to begin her book?
2. Why did Skloot chose to research Ms Lacks? (read the Prologue)
3. What did you learn about how ‘blacks’, or ‘coloreds’ (the terms African-Americans preferred at the time these events took place) were treated by the American medical system? How about other ways in which they were treated differently than white citizens? There are answers to this question scattered throughout the book…
4. What did you learn about cervical cancer and how it was usually treated in the 1950s?
5. Who was George Gey and why is he so important to this story?
6. What were the problems with growing (‘culturing’) cells outside of the body?
7. How do the laws differ regarding taking tissue samples from living people and from corpses?
8. List a few of the breakthroughs in technology spurred by these cells.
9. Does it seem that George Gey felt he made the right decision to share these cells he collected so freely?
10. What was childhood like for Henriettta’s children after she died? Which problems that are mentioned might have been because she was married to her first cousin?
11. What was the reaction from scientists to the 1966 National Institute of Health’s (NIH) rule about funding and review boards?
12. What facts about cancer were becoming understood in the mid-1960s?
13. How did the public respond to the news that researchers were ‘blending’ the cells of humans with other organisms to learn more about where certain genes are located?
14. Lawrence reveals his limited understanding of the HeLa cells usefulness as he’s cooking pork chops for Rebecca. How ‘limited’ is this?
15. What was the ‘HeLa Hit List’ and what was its significance? What was the point of taking blood samples from the Lacks family? Was it to benefit the Lacks?
16. What did Mike Rogers write in his *Rolling Stone* interview that astounded the Lacks family?
17. Did George Gey and Johns Hopkins sell Henrietta’s tissue? Why/why not?
18. What is the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act and why is it relevant?\
19. What was the first living thing to be patented? Who was the first person to market his own tissue?
20. How could it be argued that Henrietta’s cells are no longer human?
21. What was the ‘deal’ Deborah made with Rebecca in exchange for her cooperation?
22. Describe some of the emotions you see in Deborah and Zakariyya when they visit the lab where the Hela cells are stored.